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# LEGEND OF SAINT VITALIS

*AND OTHER POEMS*

ALFRED J. CHURCH



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# POEMS



*ALFRED J. CHURCH*

Oxford

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THE

# LEGEND OF SAINT VITALIS

*AND OTHER POEMS*

BY

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AUTHOR OF 'STORIES FROM HOMER,' ETC.

Oxford

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## PREFACE.

THESE few verses are all that I have been able to do towards realizing one of the dreams of my life, the winning a place, though it were but the 'lowest room,' among English poets. They have been written at rare intervals during a period of nearly forty years; and I cannot now expect the health, the spirits, or the leisure by which I might accomplish more. My excuse for collecting them is the hope that among them may possibly be found one or two worthy to live.

Most of the pieces have been published in the *Spectator*, and I thank my kind friends, the proprietors of that journal, for the permission to

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reprint them. "The Sea of Galilee" obtained the "Prize for a Poem on a Sacred Subject" at Oxford in 1883. The last two stanzas have been repeated and expanded in "A Christmas Hope." I should have omitted them but that it seemed right to print a prize poem substantially as it stood when it was submitted to the judges. The translation of "Could we forget the widowed hour" from *In Memoriam* appeared in a volume entitled *Horae Tennysonianae* which I had the honour of editing. It is now out of print, thanks, not to any urgent demand from the public, but to a fire which consumed the edition. The translation was praised by Charles Stuart Calverley, and this is my reason for reprinting it.

A. C.

HADLEY, Dec. 27, 1886.

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## THE LEGEND OF S. VITALIS.

VITALIS stood before his cell and mused;  
“Of women cometh wickedness,” so spake  
Jesus the son of Sirach, speaking truth.  
I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast led my feet  
Far from the perilous ways wherein they stand  
Watching for souls of men, for, since I closed  
My mother’s eyes in death, I have not looked  
On face of woman, and my heart is fixed  
Not to regard it till the day I die.’  
And peace was in his soul; but ere he slept  
He read the Gospel,—how the woman stood  
Behind the Christ, and washed His feet with tears,  
And wiped them with her hair; and all the night  
Christ seemed to walk beside him in his dreams  
Through the great sinful city: foul of tongue,

---

Bare-bosomed, evil-eyed, the women thronged ;  
But He, with boundless yearning in His eyes,  
Pointed, and said, ‘ My sisters,—shall they die ? ’  
And the monk woke, and thought, ‘ It is a snare ’ ;  
But night by night he found the dream return,  
And ever saw within the yearning eyes  
A mightier love, and heard the pleading voice  
Broken with tears ; so, after counsel sought  
Of him who ruled the house, Vitalis went.

Much mused he going how the work might speed,  
And doubted much, and, when he reached the town,  
Stood in the turmoil as a man amazed.  
Then wandering, as it seemed, with aimless foot,  
Came to a quay from which they loaded wheat  
On corn-ships bound for Rome. A sailor cried,  
Mocking his garb, ‘ Ho ? slaggard, wilt thou work ? ’  
And the rough voice was as the voice of God,  
Scattering his doubt, for all the day he worked  
Hard, as for life, then going, wage in hand,  
Found one who issued to her evil trade,

---

And gave, and whispered, ‘From thy brother Christ ;  
Sin not to-night’ ; then followed to her house,  
Heedless what men might say, and, while she slept,  
Wrestled with prayer and weeping for her soul.

So did he many days, but some, who saw  
The man go to and fro in evil haunts,  
Thought shame, and spake him roughly, ‘Break thy vows,  
False monk, in honest wedlock, if thou must,  
Nor drag the robe of Christ in filthy ways.’  
But he was silent, or with brief reply,  
‘To my own Lord I answer,’ went his way ;  
For much he feared lest they, the thrice accursed,  
Who live by others’ sin, should mar the work.  
But not the less—for never yet was maid  
That shrank from ill with keener pang of shame—  
The iron pierced his soul, and all his cry,  
Save but for those the lost ones whom he sought,  
Was ever this,—‘Lord, let my cause be known ;  
Let Thy word try me, living, Lord, or dead,—  
All as Thou wilt, so only all be known.’

And oft at noon-day, in the pause of toil,  
His thoughts unbidden travelled to the home  
Of the old peaceful days, the rock-built cell,  
The garden in the ledges of the cliff,  
With melon gay and pulse and climbing gourd;  
And the great desert sleeping in the sun,  
Changelessly calm; and 'neath the furthest sky,  
The green Nile-watered fields and shining stream.

But at the last it chanced, that, coming forth  
From some ill-famed abode, a passer-by  
Espied and smote him, harder than he wot;  
And he, as knowing that the end was come,  
Cried, 'Man, thou smitest sore, but all the town  
Shall hear the blow which I will smite thee back.'  
Then staggered, bleeding, wounded to the death,  
To such mean chamber as he called his own.  
But one poor wanderer, whom his love had brought  
To life from paths of death, had marked the deed;  
And her nor oath of silence, nor the thought  
How all her shameful past must spring to light,

---

Kept, but she told her tale ; and every word,  
Heard through the stormy passion of her sobs,  
Pierced as a dagger to the striker's heart,  
Till grovelling on the ground, ‘O Lord !’ he cried,  
‘ Forgive me, I have slain thy sweetest saint.’  
Then rose and hasted, seeking for the monk,—  
And the crowd grew behind him as he ran.  
Dead on his knees they found him, with a scroll  
Whereon was writ, with hand that failed in death,  
*Judge nougħt before the time, till Christ shall come,*  
*Bringing to day the hidden things of night,*  
*And making plain the counsels of the heart.*

And when they buried him, behind the bier  
Walked Patriarch, priests, and nobles, as was meet ;  
And a great throng of women, happy wives,  
And mothers blest in wedlock-bands, and some,  
Vowed servants of the Church, for Christ had won  
His sisters, and the monk had worked his work.

(The story may be found in Mr. Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints*,  
January.)

## THE SEA OF GALILEE.

*Galilace, vicisti.*

**A**MONG the many-tinted hills it lies,  
‘Deep Galilee,’ like a sapphire which a queen  
Wears on her breast, amid the gorgeous dyes,  
Glory of Eastern looms, and lustrous sheen  
Of woven gold; while deep with kindred hue  
Arches above the cloudless Syrian blue.

Fair as of old it lies, but sad, and lone,  
And lifeless,—only wheeling from the cliff  
The cormorant cries, and on some wave-washed stone  
The crane stands watching, or some fisher’s skiff  
Spreads on the vacant waters to the gale  
The solitary whiteness of a sail.

Or, haply, journeyed from some Western land,  
At the wave's edge a stranger reins his steed ;  
Among his desert riders see him stand,  
Gazing with eyes far rapt, that seem to heed  
Nought but the Presence which divinely fills  
Green earth, and shimmering lake, and purple hills.

Earth has no holier spot,—not where the Maid  
Bowed her meek head to hear from Gabriel's lips  
Her high espousals, nor where He was laid  
Whose uncreated glory bare eclipse  
In the frail childhood of a man, nor where  
He drained with mighty agonies of prayer

The cup of His great passion, nor the Hill,  
Surnamed of death, on whose dark brow He gave  
His life to the destroyers, to fulfil  
The world's great ransom, nor that empty grave  
From which streams forth for ever on the night  
Of worlds unseen Hope's unextinguished light.

---

Earth's holiest spot,—yet not for marvels wrought,  
Though on these shores, where proud Capernaum's  
head  
Lies low in dust, to paths of life He brought  
The unreturning footsteps of the dead;  
Though here still roll the self-same waves that grew  
Calm at His footsteps; though the winds that knew,  
Hushed to swift peace, the bidding of their Lord;  
Rush fierce as ever from the circling hills;  
And, where the gently sloping heights afford  
A larger space, the watchful love that fills  
All things that live immediate bade appear  
For instant need the bounties of the year.

Here dwell the memories of His earthly days,  
Of that fair Presence, full of truth and grace,  
In which, attempered to our mortal gaze,  
The Eternal Glory shone, while, face to face,  
Man talked with God, in grasp of human hands  
Feeling the Love by which Creation stands;

Here to the littleness, not all unsweet,  
Of daily needs He stooped ; here shared the talk  
That ripples kindly on where comrades meet  
For meal, or noonday rest, or evening walk ;  
Here deigned to feel, while all things owned Him Lord,  
Heart drawn to heart in friendship's sweet accord.

O mightiest friendship since the world began !  
Mark by yon shore, of lowly garb and mien,  
Slow pacing, rapt in thought, that lonely man,  
A son of toil, a nameless Nazarene ;  
This hour His mission calls Him, He shall take  
Publican, peasant, fisher of the lake,—

Weak natures, apt to fear, and narrow souled,—  
And He shall teach them greatness ; they shall grow  
His presence shaping, to heroic mould ;  
Shall wield the mystic arms that overthrow  
The strongholds built of evil, and shall find  
The secret of the keys that loose and bind.

Such were the partner brothers ; all the night  
Still saw the favourable moonlight gleam  
On empty nets, till rolling thick and white  
The mists of morning gathered, and the beam  
Of earliest sunrise showed its rosy light  
O'er Gilead's hill and Bashan's oak-clad height.

Then, as they turned them shoreward, One, who cried  
With voice of strange, sweet, mastering command,  
Bade cast again upon the nearer side ;  
Now such the shoal, they scarce can win the land.  
Then, while they count and wonder, 'Ye shall be  
Fishers of men,' He said, 'but follow Me.'

Fishers of men ! who would not rather stay  
Content to win the waters' glittering spoil,  
Careless to ply the labours of the day,  
Careless to sleep the dreamless sleep of toil,  
Till, toil and slumber ended, by his grave  
Shall plash unheard the long familiar wave ?

Fishers of men ! what perilous seas ye dare !  
What hidden treachery of shoal and rock !  
What toil of adverse winds ! what dull despair  
Of stagnant calm ! what dread of tempest shock !  
What pain of wasted night and fruitless day !  
How wild the waters, and how fierce the prey !

Yet go ! ye bear your Master o'er the deep.  
Shall they who carry such a Cæsar fear ?  
Go, for He watches, though He seem to sleep,  
And when ye think Him distant, He is near,  
Ready, through blackest night and loudest storm,  
To show the radiant Presence of His form.

Lo ! ye shall leave Him, ye shall watch Him die,  
As dies some felon slave ; but death shall seal  
The unfinished pact of life, and bind the tie  
It seems to loose for ever ; ye shall feel  
A mightier Presence, and shall nearer draw  
To Him ye see not, than to Him ye saw.

---

So shall ye conquer till the Jew disclaim  
His haughty saintship, till the Greek shall own  
His long-sought wisdom found; the Name ye name  
Shall quell the ravening eagles that have flown  
From Roman hills o'er either world, and draw  
Barbarian chaos to the sway of law.

Not this your triumph, that the future brings  
Days when the Pontiff Fisherman shall shine  
In Cæsar's purple, and on necks of kings  
Shall plant the foot of lordship; more divine  
The kingdom that ye fight for, it shall win  
Spirits and souls of men, and rule within.

This is thy lesson, Lake of Galilee!  
Not from the seats of Empire,—lordly Nile,  
Tiber, or proud Euphrates,—but from thee,  
Fair lake, that knowest but to frown or smile  
As skies are calm or angry, springs the power  
That rules the world till Time's supremest hour.

The towers of stone shall crumble, and the wall  
Lie level as the plain; thy sea and sky  
Change not, O Lake! while Empires rise and fall,  
Types of the changeless faith that shall not die,  
Though all things human fail it, till the Son  
See in a world restored the Eternal Purpose won.

And when the great time-cycles bring to nought  
The births of Time, by instant change or slow,—

Whether it fall that what the years have wrought  
The years undo, or instant-kindled glow

Of solar fires dissolve this solid frame,  
Sudden as raindrop in a furnace-flame,

Thy glory still endures, for He that trod

Thy shores of old hath set, beyond the range  
Of mortal ebb and flow, secure in God

The manhood that He bare, and over Change,  
Mighty world-conqueror, and destroying Time,  
A Galilean victor, sits sublime.

*ELIJAH.*

Fragments of an uncompleted poem.

\* \* \* \* \*

The children's wail, the strong man's dumb despair  
Smote on his soul. All daily sights and sounds,  
Distressful lowings of the herds that lay  
Spent by the dusty pools, the blighted fields,  
And Gilead's royal forests all discrowned,  
Reproached him. Wherefore far from haunts of men,  
Where Cherith flows by Ammon's furthest bound,  
He dwelt remote, and waited. Not alone  
He dwelt, whose solitude was populous  
With signs of God, and table daily spread  
By Him who makes the wilderness abound  
With plenty of the mart, and lays command  
On all things, stormy wind and flaming fire,  
And beast and feathered fowl, to serve His will.

\* \* \* \* \*

---

'Let him that troubleth Israel stand accursed!'  
Aye—but who is he? Not the man who wakes  
A nation brain-benumbed with opiate draughts  
Of pleasure, pointing to the lurid clouds  
Where fires of vengeance gather, not the voice  
That shakes the tyrannies of wrong, or bares  
Veiled oracles of falsehood to the day;  
Not these, but rather he who whispers 'Peace'  
Where peace is not, who prophesies deceits,  
Who feeds with lies high-swollen lusts of power,  
Or smooths the path of folly till it end  
Abrupt in some sheer precipice of doom.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.—2 Kings ii. 11.*

So passed the prophet, rapt from mortal eyes,  
And saw not death: to what serener air,  
What nobler work translated, passes all  
God grants of knowledge,—only this we know:  
Who stands while God prepares his judgment-day,

---

And in the dawn that seems to other eyes  
Mere darkness bears his witness to the light,  
Stands in his spirit and power; who cries, ‘Prepare,  
Make straight the crooked ways of wrong, and raise  
Mean things to greatness, and abase the proud,’  
His voice is as Elijah’s. Such was he,  
Greatest of woman-born, the Baptist named,  
Whom that stern mother, Solitude, had wrought  
To such a steadfast strength, that not the curse  
Of priests, or frowning kings, or deadlier rage  
Of woman shamed in lust, could stir his soul.  
Such he, the Florentine, whose thunders shook  
The Mediceän halls, and thrilled the soul  
Of slumbering Italy from Alp to sea;  
And such the Teuton Great-heart, undismayed,  
Whom not the angry Kaiser, where he sat  
With prince and prelate, nor the mystic power  
Of Peter’s triple crown, one hair’s-breadth stirred  
From that high vantage whence he moved the world.

O England! O my country! if there come  
Such voice to thee, in these dark, latter days;  
If some stern prophet—and Elijah's God  
Has yet His prophets—bid thee cleanse thy house  
From foulness that thou knowest, myriad sins  
That ease has bred, and faithless pride, and scorn  
Of kindred blood, and hatred, child of wrong,  
Heed, lest the curse should fall, and topple down  
Thy greatness in the dust, for all thy bounds  
Stretch from the rising to the setting Sun,  
And touch at either Pole the eternal frost.

## A HOPE.

## I.

SLOWLY we gather and with pain  
From many toils a scanty gain  
We strive to know, but scant our powers,  
And short the time, and strait the bounds,  
And ever-unsurmounted towers  
The mortal barrier that surrounds  
Our being; and the body still,  
Imperious slave, betrays the will.  
Slowly we gather and with pain,—  
But quick the scattering again  
Whether it chance the failing brain  
Lets slip the treasure it hath won  
Through weary days; or sudden blow  
Lays the unshattered fabric low,  
And all our doing is undone.

## II.

Slowly a nation builds its life  
From barbarous chaos into law,  
And kindly social ties, and awe  
Of powers divine. For civil strife  
Still opens wide within the walls  
The yawning gulf that will not close  
Until the noblest victim falls;  
Or, fierce without, the shock of foes  
In one wild hour of blood o'erthrows  
The labour of the patient years;  
And if at last the work appears  
Complete in stately strength to stand,  
Riot with parricidal blow,  
Or mad ambition's traitor hand,  
Fierce clutching at the tyrant's crown,  
In headlong ruin lays it low,  
Or brute battalions tread it down,  
Or ease and luxury and sin,  
Fell cankers sown of peace, devour,

---

Till trappings of imperial power  
But hide the living death within.

III.

But doubtless growth repairs decay,  
And still the great world grows to more,  
Though men and nations pass away.  
But what if at the source of day  
Some cosmic change exhaust the store  
Which feeds the myriad forms of life?  
What if some unimagined strife  
Should raise so high the solar fire,  
That all this solid earthly frame  
Should in as brief a space expire  
As rain-drops in a furnace-flame?

IV.

Yet, if our faith is not the scheme  
Of priestly cunning, nor a dream  
Which with some fair illusion caught  
Our ungrown Manhood's childish thought;

If Christmas tells us true, 'To-day  
The Child Divine in Bethlehem lay';  
If He is Man who, past the ken  
Of Science in her widest range,  
Orders the law of ceaseless change,  
Content we know that lives of men  
Pass as the leaves of spring away,—  
That time will bring its final day  
To the great world itself, secure  
The Eternal Manhood shall endure.

## ALL SAINTS DAY.

THEY passed before; they trod the way we tread,  
A way of weary travel, but their eyes  
Still strained to see through depth of gloomy skies  
The flashing gates of pearl. All tears they shed  
Are changed to deathless blossoms on our way,  
All precious drops their wounded feet have bled  
Light like fair lamps the lonely path we tread;  
And still, but most upon this holy day,  
They hover near, and swell our faltering song,  
And waft our humble litanies on high,  
And bring us near to God. Faint heart, be strong,  
Nor shun the lightened toil. Behold, the sky  
Throws wide its portals, and the white-robed throng  
Reach forth their hands, and cry, ‘Why tarry ye so long?’

## ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS.

*Many are called, but few are chosen.*

**T**HREE are who find their life's delight,  
O Lord ! in Thee, on whom Thy grace  
Sets from the womb the halo-light  
They wear that see Thy nearer face.

And some, with sudden, strong surprise.  
That masters sin and hate and pride,  
Thou takest, as through parted skies  
When Saul beheld the Crucified.

Thou choosest, and they hear Thee call,  
For still Thou wilt not dwell alone ;  
These are Thy saints, O Lord ! but all  
The souls Thou makest are Thine own.

Too well we know they pass Thee by,  
Nor hear Thy voice, so fierce the din  
The world without them makes, the cry  
Of passion calls so loud within.

But must they walk the downward way  
To those dark gates, whereon despair  
Is writ, nor see again the day?  
Will no wild agonies of prayer

Reach to the seats of peace, and break  
The calm of heaven's harmonious days?  
No far-off sound of wailing make  
A discord in the eternal praise?

Oh! yet we trust Thy love, and Him,  
The blessed Christ, who works Thy will,  
Who once through trackless regions dim  
Of Hades passed, and rules them still,

Nor rests, nor weary grows, nor faints,  
Till all His royal work be done,—  
Till added to Thy first-fruit saints  
The harvest of Thy souls be won.

## UNSEEN.

**A**T the spring of an arch, in the great north tower,  
High up on the wall, is an angel's head,  
With, carven beneath it, a lily flower,  
And delicate wings at the side outspread.

They say that the sculptor wrought from the face.  
From the shrouded face of his promised bride,  
And, when he had added the last sad grace  
To the features, he dropped his chisel and died.

And the worshippers throng to the shrine below,  
And the sight-seers come with their curious eyes ;  
But deep in the shadow, where none may know  
Its beauty, the gem of his carving lies.

Yet at early morn on a midsummer day,  
When the sun is far to the north, for the space  
Of a few short minutes, there falls a ray,  
Through an amber pane, on the angel's face.

It was wrought for the eye of God, and it seems  
That He blesses the work of the dead man's hand  
With a gleam of the golden light that streams  
On the lost that are found in the deathless land.

## ACCIDENT.

WHAT strange, unreasoned impulse takes

By devious ways our aimless feet,

The unimagined doom to meet?

For still the fatal thunder breaks

From skies that promise peace. We go,

Scarce e'en on trivial errand bent,

And heed not, and the stroke is sent

That lays life's pleasant fabric low,—

Long days of dear domestic peace,

Love into closer union grown,

The newer knowledge made our own,

And ever, as the years increase,

---

Some clearer height of wisdom won,  
And schemes of joyous travel planned  
To holy place or classic land,  
Or marvel of the midnight sun,—

All things that counterchange our days  
With varied light of toil and ease,—  
Laborious joys, and cares that please,  
Constraint of duty, sweets of praise ;

*One* step, and over love and light,  
Things hoped and things achieved, the all  
We are and were to be, will fall  
The mornless, unremembering night.

### THE BRACELET.

CLEAR were the heavens when I kissed  
The bracelet on her taper wrist,  
Five jacinths and an amethyst.

And, as we lingered, in the height  
Through purple depths of summer night  
Shone twinkling points of starry light ;

And all things round were hushed and still,  
But through the hazel-copse a rill  
Still murmured, and one passionate thrill

Of song from some late nightingale  
With music mixed of love and wail  
Flooded the hollows of the dale.

O sunrise dim with mist and cloud !  
O head in speechless sorrow bowed !  
O golden hair in leaden shroud !

The bird has sought a warmer sky ;  
The copse is felled ; the rill is dry ;  
I sit alone ; but, till I die,

There still will gleam through tearful mist  
A bracelet on a taper wrist,  
Five jacinths and an amethyst.

*A REGRET.*

I BLAME not that your courage failed,  
That prudence over love prevailed ;  
It seemed that we must walk together  
Rough ways through wild and stormy weather,  
And you must have smooth paths to tread,  
And skies all cloudless overhead.

Wise was your choice the world will say,  
That sees you flesh and fair to-day  
As in the spring-time of your years,  
Those hazel eyes undimmed with tears,  
That forehead all unlined with care,  
Nor streaked with gray that chestnut hair.

Yet if you could have dared to lay  
Unfaltering hands in mine, and say,  
'I trust you still, nor count the cost!'  
Something, I doubt not, you had lost,  
Yet found, when all was told, remain  
To you and me some larger gain.

Not loveless nor unsweet my days ;  
I toil, nor miss some meed of praise ;  
Had you been with me they had known  
The grace they lack, and thou hadst grown,  
O weak but pure and tender heart !  
To something nobler than thou art.

### THE EBB OF LOVE.

**A** LOVE that wanes is as an ebbing tide,  
Which slowly, inch by inch, and scarce perceived,  
With many a wave that makes brave show to rise,  
Fails from the shore. No sudden treason turns  
The long-accustomed loyalty to hate,  
But years bring weariness for sweet content,  
And fondness, daily sustenance of love,  
Which use should make a tribute easier paid,  
First grudged, and then withholden, starves the heart ;  
And though compassion, or remorseful thoughts  
Of happy days departed, bring again  
The ancient tenderness in seeming flood,  
Not less it ebbs and ebbs till all is bare.

O happy shore, the flowing tide shall brim  
Thy empty pools, and spread dull tangled weeds  
In streamers many-coloured as the lights  
Which flash in northern heavens, and revive  
The fainting blossoms of the rocks ; but thou,  
O heart, whence love hath ebbed, art ever bare !

*ENGLAND AND SEBASTOPOL, 1854.*

THE moon is full; her radiance sleeps  
On field and wood, a silver light;  
In hope and fear a maiden keeps  
Her vigil through the silent night.

In thought she sees the splendour fall  
Far, far away on friend and foe,  
On sleeping camp and leaguered wall,  
And watchfires burning dim and low,

Where 'neath an Eastern sky he wakes,  
Or, sleeping till he hear the stir  
Of moving hosts as morning breaks,  
He starts to arms from dreams of her.

## NEPENTHE.

**T**HIE north wind follows free and fills  
Our rounding sail, and overhead  
Deepens the rainless blue, and red  
The sunset burns on quarried hills;

And peace is over all, as deep  
As where, amid the secular gloom  
Of some far-reaching, rock-built tomb,  
The nameless generations sleep,

While, undecayed as on the day  
That saw them first, the Kings of old,  
In sculptured calm serene, behold  
The slow millenniums pass away.

Still, far behind us, as we cleave  
Smooth-flowing Nile, the din of life  
And passionate voices of the strife  
Are hushed to silence, and we leave

The cares that haunt us, dark regret  
For wasted years, and wild unrest,  
Yearning for praise or pleasure, blest  
With life's last blessing,—to forget.

For still in Egypt's kindly air,  
Strong antidote of mortal woes,  
The painless herb, Nepenthe, grows,  
Which she whom fair-haired Leda bare

Mixed in the wine, and stilled their pain  
Who wept in Spartan halls for sire  
Or brother, wrapped in funeral fire,  
Or wandering o'er the boundless main.

## CHARLES GORDON.

January 26, 1885.

*We trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel.*

REAT soul, that scorned ignoble ease,  
Still lit with faith's undying flame,  
Great leader, ever prompt to seize  
War's swift occasions as they came !

We hoped thou couldst not fail to save ;  
We hoped,—but under alien skies,  
Far off, within thy nameless grave,  
Buried the hope of nations lies.

Is this the end ? Forbid the thought !  
The servant follows still the Lord,  
For each hath death the victory wrought,  
With Him the cross, with thee the sword.

The Saviour dies, betrayed, alone,  
His Israel unredeemed, but still  
Grows to a mightier world-wide throne  
The felon cross on Calvary's hill.

Nor thou, great soul, wast spent in vain,  
Though noblest of our later days.  
While from the tropic Nile-washed plain  
The echo of thy deathless praise

Shall bring across each petty strife,  
Each base desire, and meaner aim,  
The vision of a holier life,  
A loftier purpose, purer fame.

## IN MEMORIAM PUELLULÆ DULCISSIMÆ.

D. P. W.

Ah ! what is left for love to prize ?  
A little dress or trinket-toy  
Which once could make the innocent eyes  
Brighten with glimpses of the joy  
The woman feels in being fair—  
A chair left sadly in its place—  
A little tress of chestnut hair—  
A little likeness of her face,  
Ah ! vacant of the living light  
Which magic sunbeam never gave—  
And, on our city's northern height,  
Across a thonsand streets—a grave.

No more, no more. O fruitless pain  
Of birth and nurture, wasted years  
Of care, and watches watched in vain!  
O idle hopes! O idle fears!

'Tis well to tell us she is blest,  
That never sin or grief shall break  
The quiet of her perfect rest.

O God, but is it well to make  
These desolate homes, that round Thy throne  
Haply may stand in denser throng  
The children-angels? Must the tone  
Of these pure voices swell the song  
That hymns Thee Lord of all, and leave  
These dreadful gaps of silence here?

O Lord, forgive us if we grieve  
Too wildly, if the starting tear  
Confuse our vision; make us see  
What steadfast, changeless purpose runs

Through all Thy ways, to bring to Thee,  
Or soon or late, Thy wandering sons.  
Content if slow they come, for sake  
Of those they love, and loath to part  
From what Thou givest, Thou dost take  
The treasure lest Thou lose the heart.

## IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM BROWNRIGG SMITH.

MARTYRS there are, whose high renown  
Fills heaven and earth alike, who rise  
On fiery chariot to the skies;  
There are who win the martyr's crown

While leading dull, mechanic days,  
Who, walking in the common round  
Of meanest duties, still have found  
Occasions of divinest praise.

Such was our friend; the many knew  
His presence, with its genial grace,  
The low, sweet voice, the kindly face,  
They knew him loyal, tender, true.

They knew not all. Erect and calm  
He bore a burden that had bent  
A meaner spirit, still content  
To run the race nor ask the palm.

God gave him much, but much denied.  
He had the scholar's deepest lore,  
Nor spurned at fame, yet never wore  
The bays that grace a scholar's pride.

God gave him love; with ceaseless care  
One flickering flame of life to tend,  
To watch, to pray, and, when the end  
Was come for her, his rest was near.

Rest, dear one, where thine all is known:  
We wander on with weary feet  
Through darkened ways, until we meet,  
If meet we may, before the throne.

*ON THE DEATH OF A DOG.*

LADY, I hold the poet's task  
No wasted pains, though some may say.  
'What right has meaner loss to ask  
Our human grief, when every day

That dawns in Eastern skies must make  
On loving lips the passionate kiss  
Grow cold for ever, and shall break  
A thousand nearer ties than this?'

Ah! well; but who is wise to know  
How man, the lordly head and crown,  
Is finely linked with things below;  
Through what gradations passing down

The common nerve of kindred runs ?

And if we mourn for something lost,  
Whene'er it chance that treacherous suns  
Have leagued with April's lingering frost

To slay the tender blooms of spring,

Who then shall deem the gift a wrong  
To nobler sorrows if we bring  
For such a grave a wreath of song ?

/  
Not only now for something bright,  
A pleasant presence past away,  
Not only for the vanished light  
Of hazel eyes you mourn to-day ;

Not only that the glancing feet  
Are still in death, that never more  
The happy-ringing voice may greet  
Familiar steps upon the floor ;

For something more than common dust  
Was that which clung so close to man,  
The heart that still was wise to trust,  
And strong to love; whose pulses ran

An honest current, to the beat  
Of one affection ever true—  
Bring, happy springtime, for the sweet  
The sweetest flowers that ever grew;

And thou, lie kindly light on her,  
O gentle earth, whose delicate tread  
Thy frailest flower would scarcely stir,  
And softly lap the graceful head.

Can this be all? or shall we deem  
That in the thought of equal skies  
Of which some simple soul may dream  
More than an idle fancy lies?

---

Ah! who shall answer? for we grow  
Confused with darkness, and the veil  
Is over all things; this we know,  
‘ That love is love, and shall not fail.

## THE TAPESTRY OF PROSERPINE.

CLAUDIAN, *The Rape of Proserpine*, i. 246-65.

THE elemental order there she drew  
And Jove's high dwellings ; there you saw  
The needle tell how ancient Chaos grew  
To harmony and law ;

How Nature set in order due and rank  
Her atoms, raised the light on high,  
And to the middle place the weightier sank ;  
There lustrous shone the sky,

The heavens were quick with flame, the ocean rolled,  
The great world hung in mid suspense.  
Each was of diverse hue ; she worked in gold  
The starry fires intense,

Bade ocean flow in purple, and the shore  
With gems upraised. Divinely wrought,  
The threads embossed to swelling billows bore  
Strange likeness; you had thought

They dashed the sea-weed on the rocks, or crept  
Hoarse murmuring thro' the thirsty sands.  
Five zones she added. In mid place she kept  
With red distinct the lands

Leaguered with burnings; all the region showed  
Scorched into blackness, and the thread  
Dry as with sunshine that eternal glowed;  
On either hand were spread

The realms of life, lapt in a milder breath  
Kindly to men: and next appear,  
On this extreme and that, dull lands of death;  
She made them dark and drear

---

With year-long frost, and saddened all the hue  
With endless winter ; last she showed  
What seats her Sire's grim brother holds, nor knew  
The fated dark abode.

## THE DREAM-LOVERS.

[ATHENÆUS, xii. 35.]

O DATIS, child of him who ruled the lands  
Eastward from Tanaïs, in her dreams beheld  
Prince Zariadres, whom the tribes obeyed  
To Tanaïs northwards from the Caspian Gates,  
Beheld, and loved him ; and the Prince beheld  
The maid in visions of the night, and loved,--  
Fairest of Asian dames the girl, and he  
Of Asia's sons the fairest. So the twain,  
Though sundered far, were constant each to each.  
And Zariadres, when the time was ripe,  
Asked her in marriage ; but the King, whose house  
But for the girl was childless, lest his realm  
Should fret at alien rule, denied the suit ;  
And ere the year had circled, he ordained

His daughter's marriage, calling to the feast  
Kinsmen, and friends, and princes of the land,  
All Scythia's noblest, nor for whom the bride  
He purposed and the heirship of his crown  
Declared ; but when the revel was at height  
Bade fetch the maiden to the hall, and said,  
' These be thy suitors, girl. Now take the cup,  
The cup from which the Kings my fathers drank,  
And mix, and give it as thy heart shall choose.'

With one swift glance from under drooping lids  
She scanned the glittering throng, nor saw the One,  
The lover of her dream ; then slowly turned,  
And sought the board whereon the cups were ranged,  
Seeing her instant fate, but hoping yet  
Wildly against all hope. And he, it chanced,  
Drawn by war rumours to his frontier, lay  
Encamped by Tanaïs ; and he knew her need,  
Though no man told him, for their hearts were one.  
All day he drove across the Scythian plain,  
Nor spared the lash, and when the sun was set

Came where the King held revel. There he left  
Chariot and charioteer, nor feared to pass,  
In garb of Scythian prince, the palace doors.  
With shout and song the revellers quaffed the wine  
Unheeding, and Odatis at the board  
Stood cup in hand, and slowly mixed the draught,  
While the big tear-drops trickled down her cheek.  
Then the Prince knew the lady of his dreams,  
And whispered, ‘At thy bidding I am come,  
O best beloved’; and she beheld him stand,  
Unknown, yet known, and smiling through her tears,  
Reached him her hand, nor doubted, and the twain  
Passed from the hall to where the chariot stood.  
Forth sprang the willing steeds, and all the night,  
For Aphrodite gave them strength, devoured  
The plain with feet untiring, till they came  
With morning to the river and the camp.

## HECUBA AND AGAMEMNON.

EURIPIDES, *Hecuba*, 774-833.

NOW, for the cause for which I clasp thy knees,  
Listen, and if thou deemest that my wrongs  
Are justly borne, I bear and am content ;  
But else, O King ! avenge me of the man,  
This wickedest of hosts, who neither fears  
The nether world, nor upper, and hath wrought  
The wickedest of deeds ; for many a time  
He sat among my guests and ever stood  
First of my friends, and so received my son  
In wardship, with provision as was meet ;  
Then slew him ; aye ! and having slain, denied  
Due burial rites, but cast him on the waves.

For me—I am a slave, and doubtless weak;  
Yes—but the gods are strong, and strong is law,  
Which sways the gods, for verily of law  
Comes faith in gods that rule us, and the sense  
By which we live, dividing right from wrong.  
Shall law appeal to thee, and be contemned?  
Shall he who slays the guest, who robs the shrine,  
Escape unpunished? Nay, for then would be  
No justice anywhere in human things.  
Far be such baseness from thee! yield me, King,  
The suppliant's meed of pity; stand apart,  
As stands a painter, and regard me well,  
And know what woes are mine. But yesterday  
I was a queen, I am thy slave to-day;  
I had a noble offspring, see me now  
Childless and old—no fatherland, no friends—  
Surely the wretchedest of mortal things.

*[Agamemnon seems to be about to depart.]*

Unhappy that I am! where wilt thou go?  
I seem to speak but vainly, woe is me!

O foolish mortals, why do we pursue,  
Careful, as duty bids, all arts beside,  
But this one art—Persuasion—though it be  
Sole lord of men, desire not with desire  
E'en at a price to learn, and so to sway  
All hearts to what we would, and gain our end?  
Who after me can hope for happy days?  
So many sons I had, and all are gone,  
And I am borne away in shameful guise,  
A captive of the spear, and see the smoke  
Rising above this city of my birth.

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

Listen again. Thou seest this dead child;  
Pay him due honour, 'tis to thine own kin  
Honour is paid. One word is lacking yet.  
Oh! that there dwelt within these arms a voice  
(The work of art, Dædalean or divine),—  
These hands, and these white hairs, and weary feet,  
All should together cling about thy knees  
With tears, with all imaginable speech.

O Lord! chief light of Hellas, hear, and reach  
A hand of helping to my helpless age,—  
Aye, though I be as nothing, reach it forth.  
Still should the good man serve the cause of Right,  
And to ill-doers work continual ill.

## 'COULD WE FORGET THE WIDOWED HOUR.'

TENNYSON, *In Memoriam* xxxix.

H EI mihi! si nobis orbata intercidat hora,  
si liceat carum sic meminisse caput,  
ut sponsam meminisse iuvat quo tempore crines  
virgineos proprio flore ligavit Hymen!  
illa, suis iam fausta precantibus omnia, notos  
supremum alloquitur mox abitura locos,  
dum desiderium teneros leve turbat ocellos,  
spesque simul, vernum ut sol pluviaeque diem.  
gaudia nunc agitant animos incerta paternos,  
matris et humectat lacrima multa genas,  
filia dum longo complexu avulsa suorum  
quaerit quae potior federa iungit amor.  
illi pars alere et praecoptis fingere prolem,  
et fungi quae lex munera fasque iubet,

iungere praesentes annis venientibus annos,  
et sobolem veteri consociare novam.  
tu quoque iam peragis, credo, felicius aevum,  
quodque facis nunquam mors abolebit opus;  
tu quoque caelicolum iam viribus auctus adultis  
officio fungi nobiliore potes.  
at tua sors illi quantum heu! diversa videtur;  
gaudebit quotiens, sit procul illa, domus,  
prospera sollicitas cum fama advenerit aures!  
et quotiens, patrios cum petet ipsa focos!  
illic saepe novam prolem ostentare iuvabit,  
saepe suis placeat quod didicisse loqui,  
dum, dolor amissae si cui prius acrior esset,  
ipse novas pariter res placuisse ferat.  
at nos, donec hyemps hanc clauserit ultima vitam,  
fata vetant caras consociare manus.  
heu! ego quos novi perlustro flebilis agros,  
tu loca mortali non adeunda pedi.





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